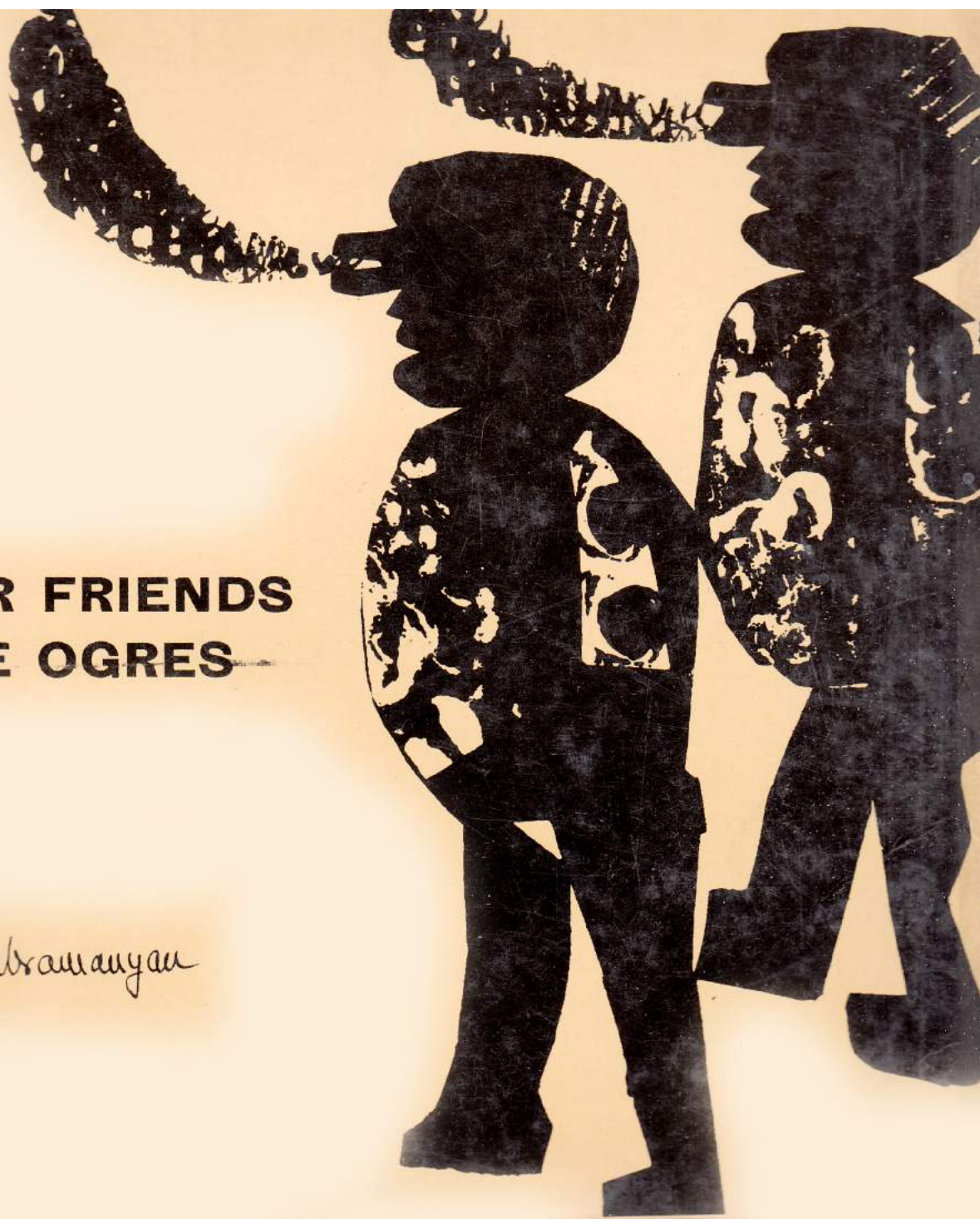
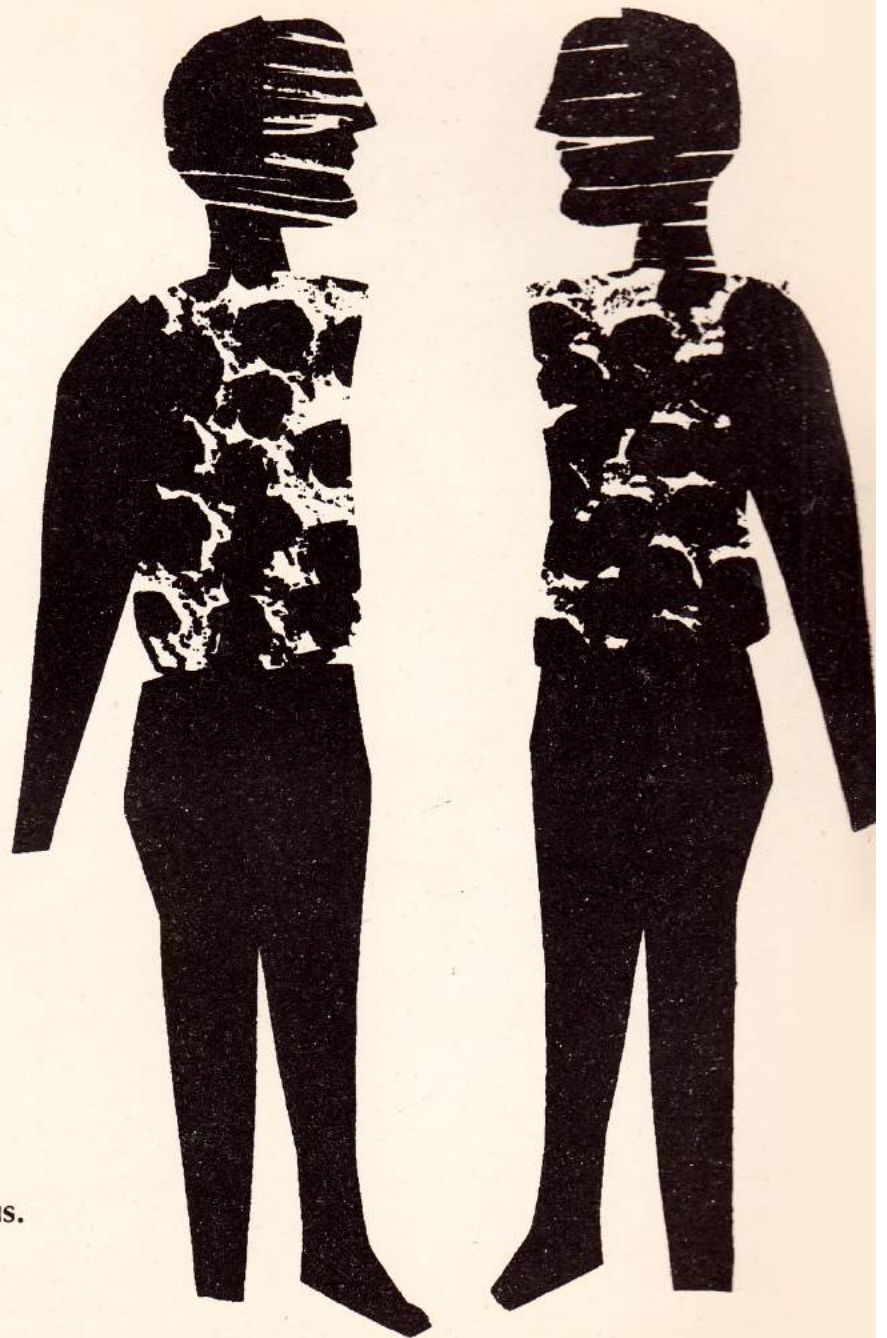


**OUR FRIENDS
THE OGRES**

K.G. Subramanyam





Once upon a time
the ogres were people like us.



But they did odd things.

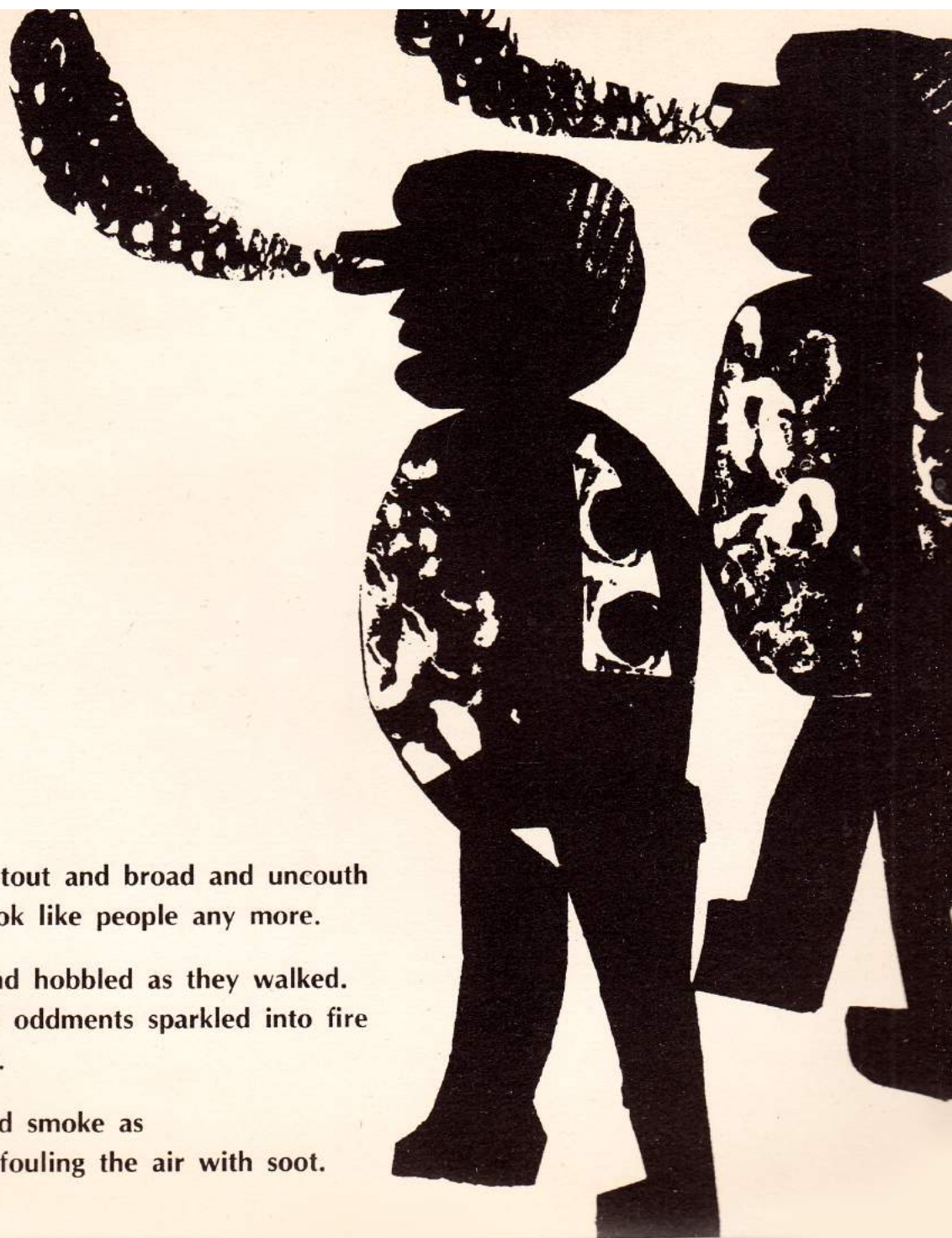
They ate nuts and bolts for breakfast,
stones and trees for lunch,
pots and pans, cloth and china for snacks,
apart from other things other people eat.

For dinner, well, they were so full by the dinner time
that they went straight to bed.

So they grew stout and broad and uncouth
and did not look like people any more.

They bulged and hobbled as they walked.
The stones and oddments sparkled into fire
in their insides.

So they belched smoke as
they went by, fouling the air with soot.





But, for all that, ogres wanted to be
like people,
walk the gardens, watch the sunset,
play games
with people.

But in doing so,
they trampled the flowerbeds into a mess,
blew soot to the high skies,
and scared girls and children
from the meadows.

They (the people)
were small and weak,
while they (the ogres)
were stout and strong.

This upset people.
Can't we catch them
and shut them up?
they cried.

But how could they?





So they sought the advice
of Ogre Catchers Inc. NY,
NY.

Who went instantly
into conference
for twelve long hours
with twelve coffee breaks.

And they gave them
printed advice.



'You have to catch them
on their backs and not their feet,
that is our view,' they said,
as they presented their bill.

To find where,
you can consult Snoopers Inc.
they advised.

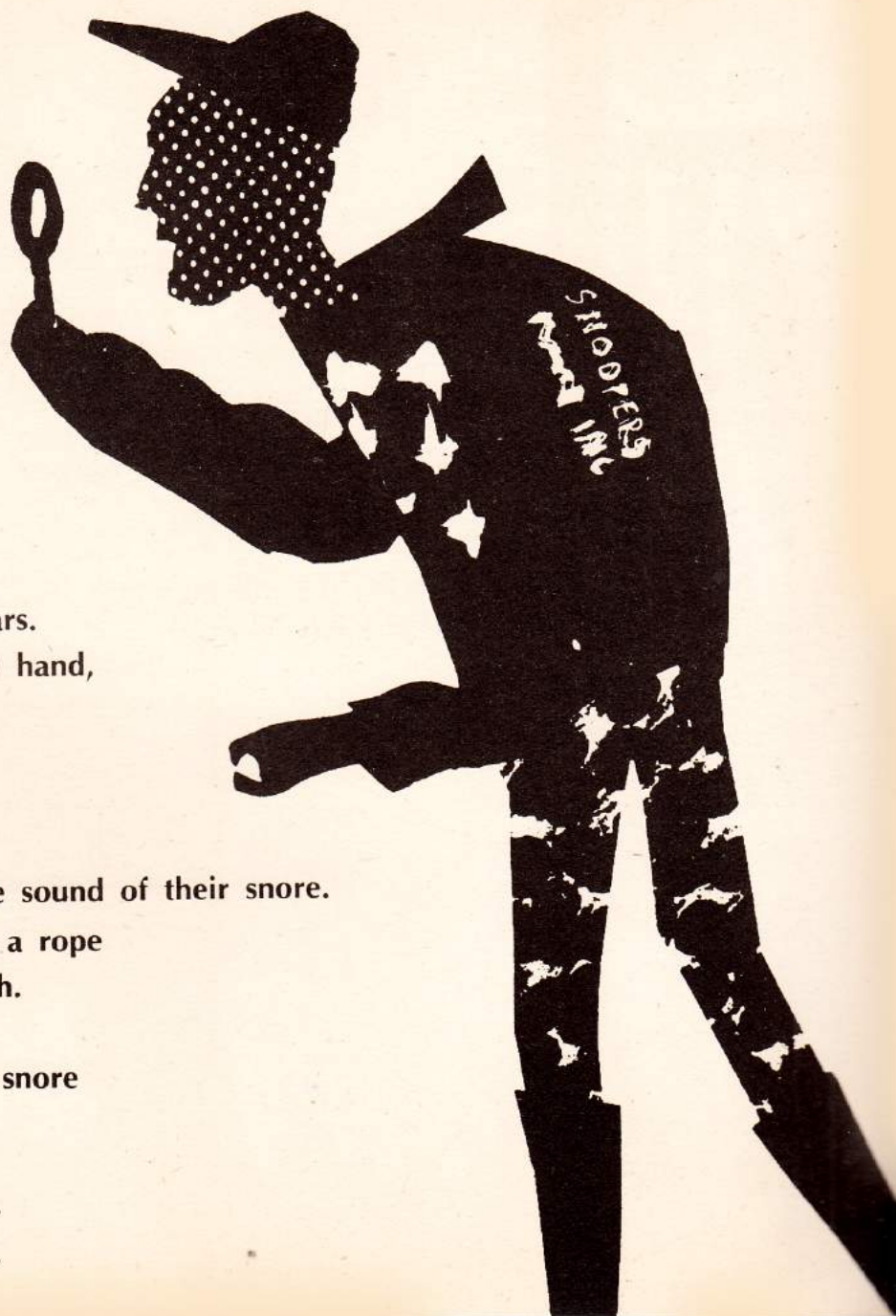
To keep them where they are,
ask Staplers Inc.

They are both our subsidiaries.

This advice is gratis!



So people called in
the 'Snoopers'.
Snoopers were great guys,
they were all eyes, and ears.
Walking by night, torch in hand,
tiptoe,
they looked for places
where the ogres slept,
clue by clue.
But the main clue was the sound of their snore.
They caught on it like on a rope
and advanced inch by inch.
The last lap was easy,
the force of the receding snore
sucked them near.
There they are, they said.
We have finished our job.
Now call in the 'Staplers'.



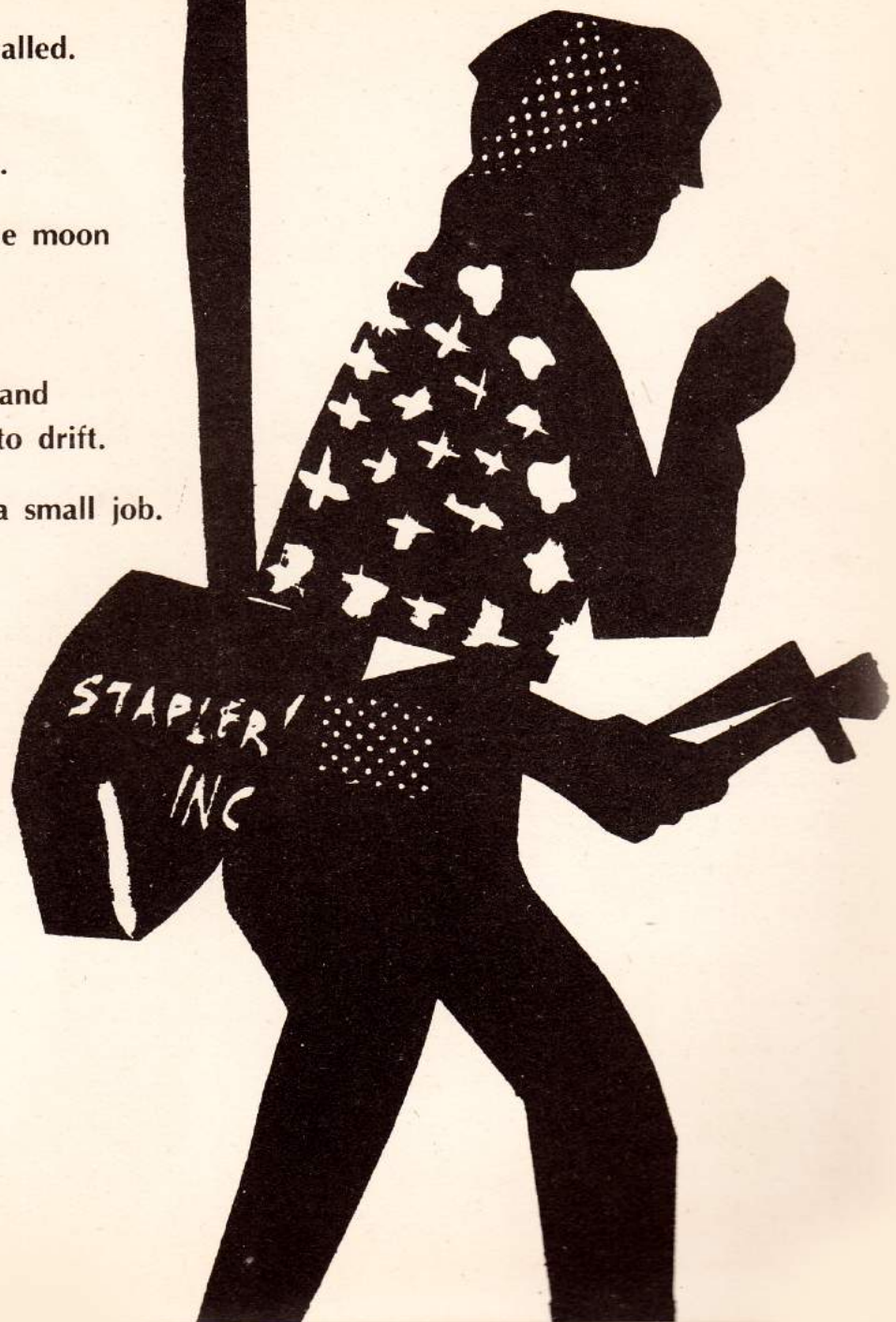
The Staplers were called.

Staplers Inc.
was an old concern.

They had stapled the moon
to the sky
in the last century.

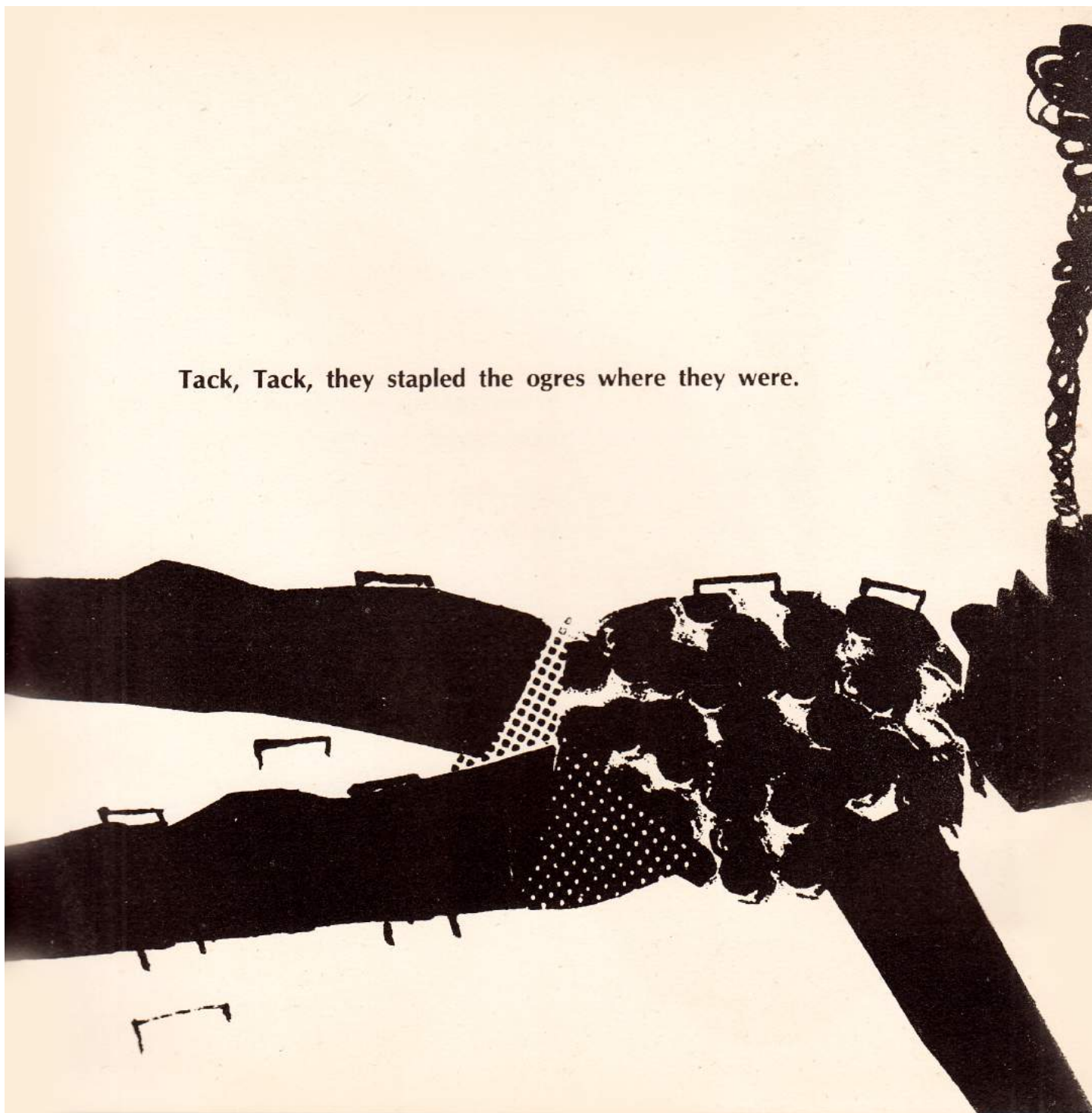
And Ireland to England
when they wanted to drift.

This was for them a small job.





Tack, Tack, they stapled the ogres where they were.



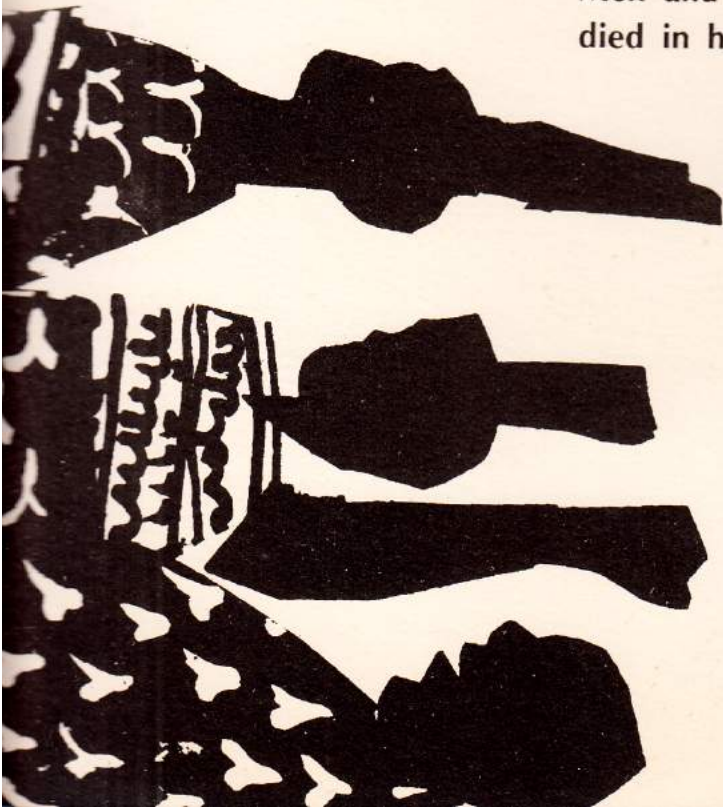


When the ogres woke in the morning
they found they could not move.

And they were hungry.
So they raised a big racket.

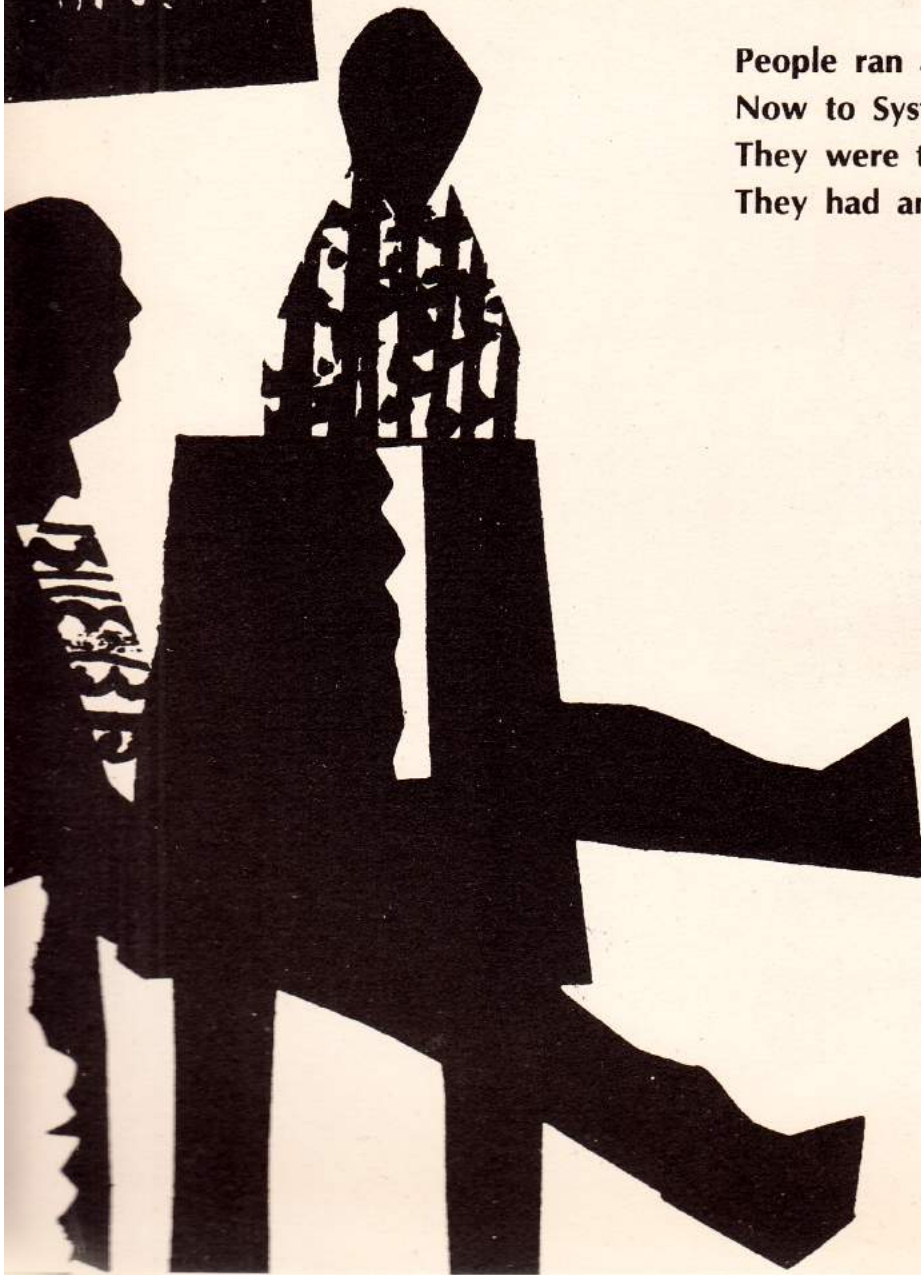
And an ogre's racket is no feast to the ear.
Or balm to the heart.

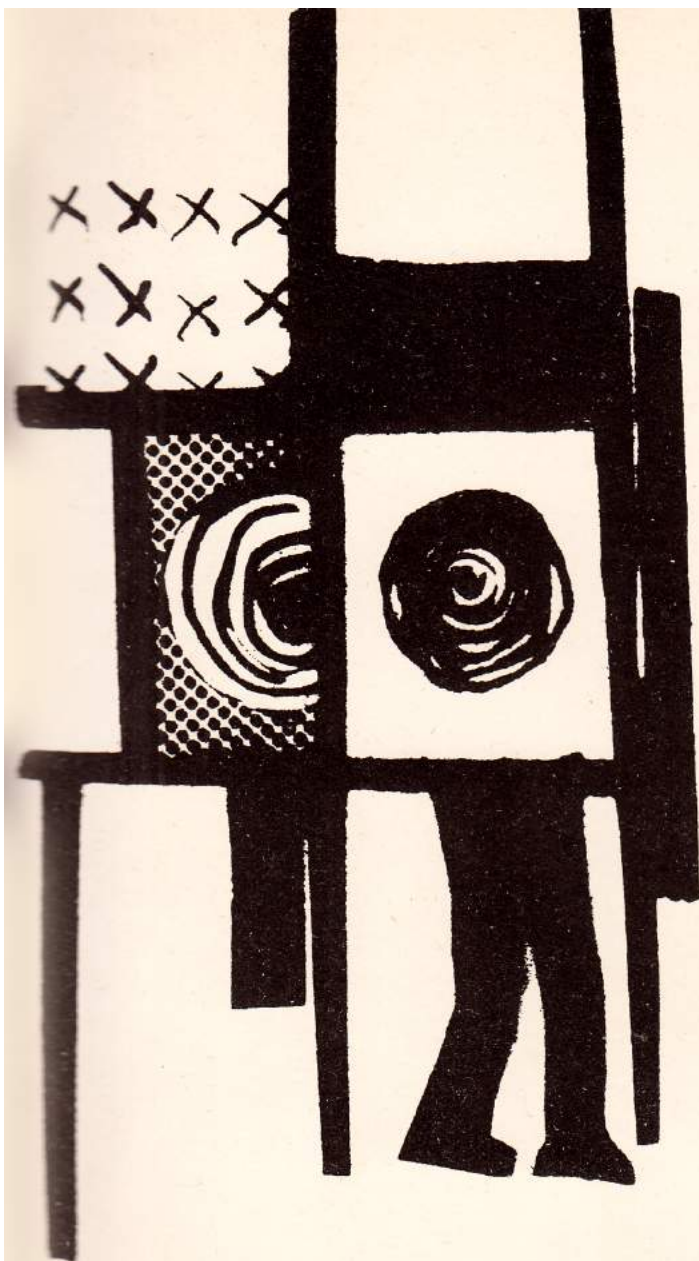
Men and women with weak hearts
died in hundreds on the street.



SYSTEMS
INC.

People ran again.
Now to Systems Inc.
They were trouble-busters.
They had an answer to everything.



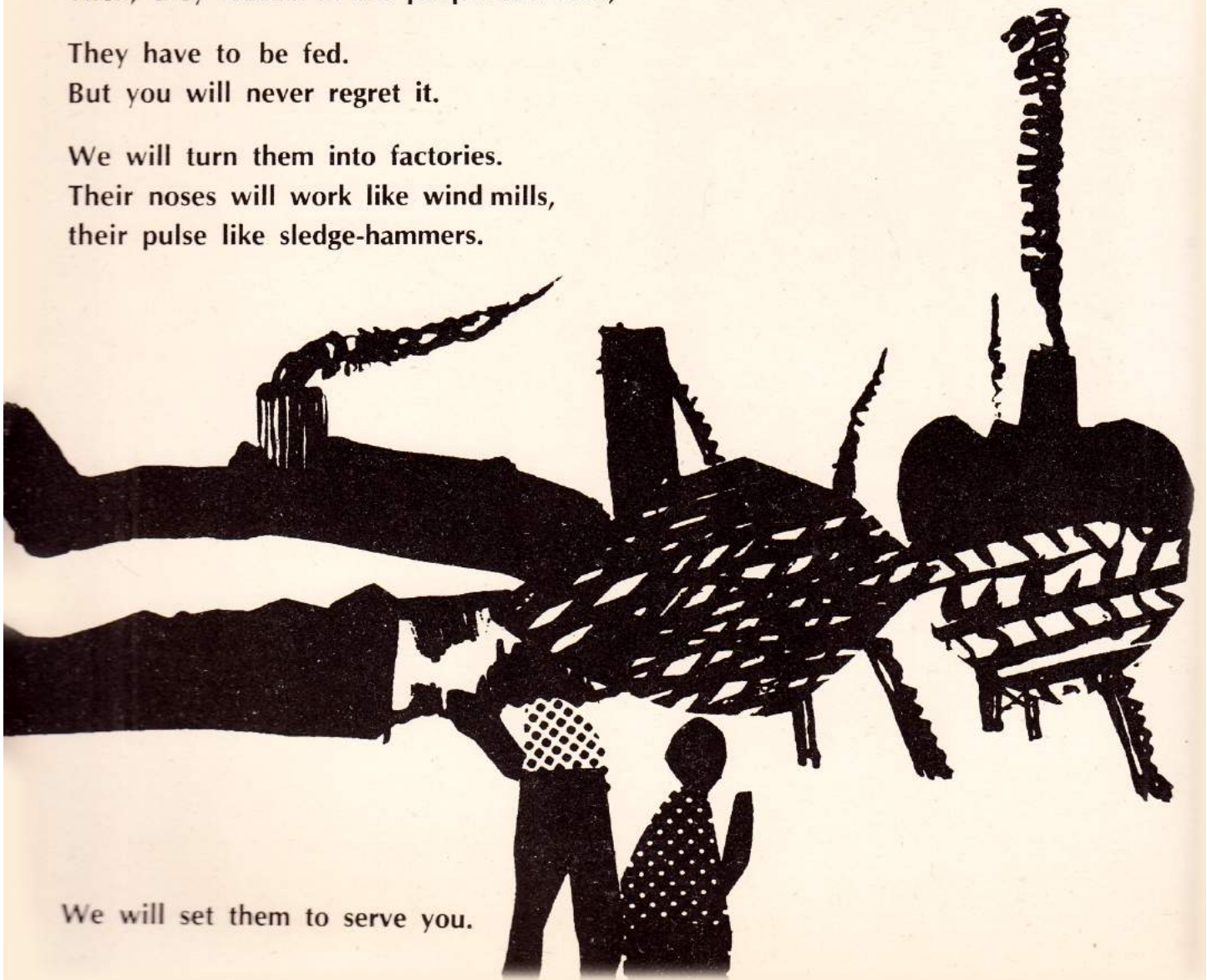


They turned problems into profit.
They saw what others did not see.
They did what others did not do.

They went near the ogres and smiled.
And tickled them in the ribs with india rubber fingers.
Then, they looked at the people and said,

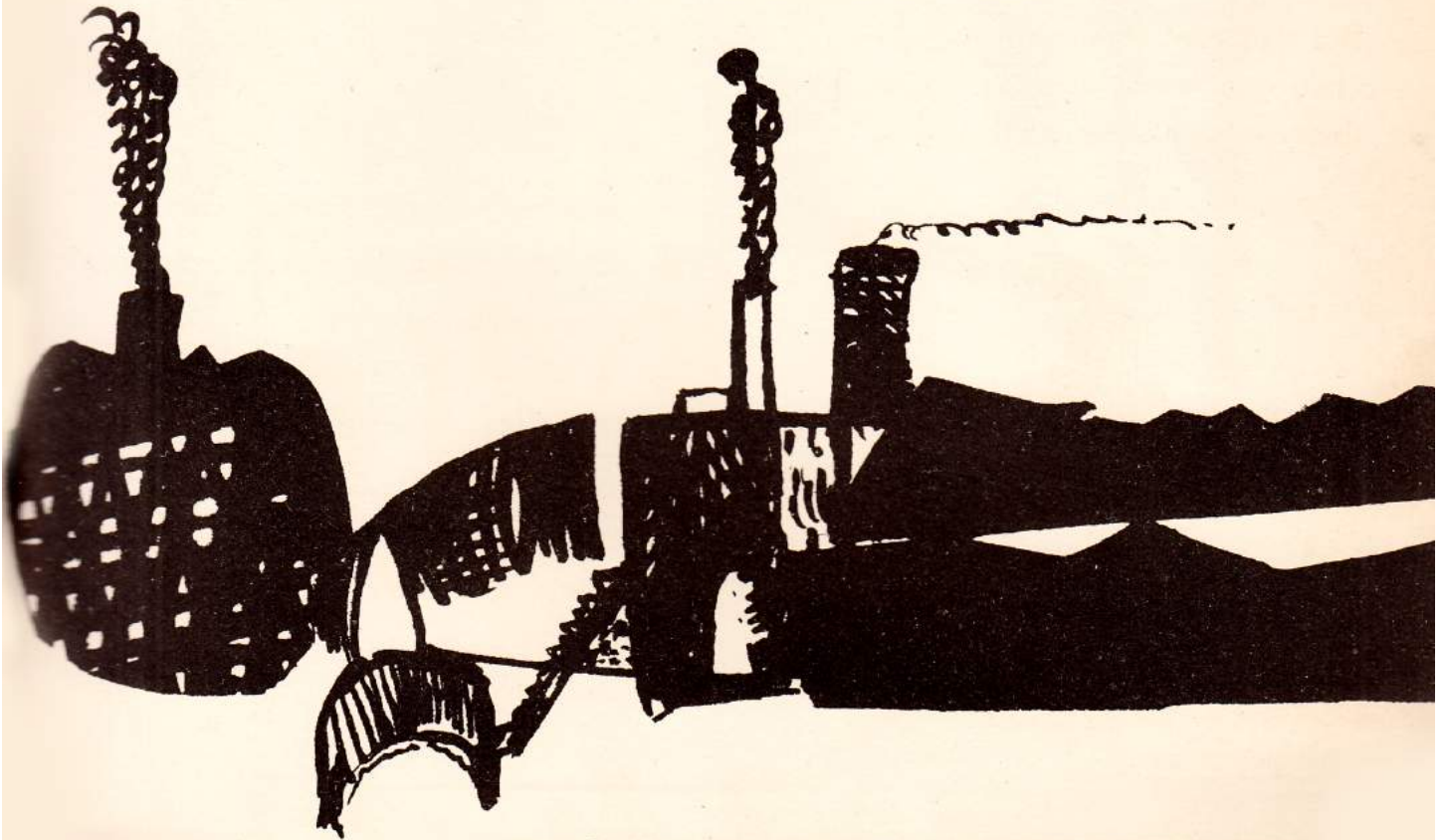
They have to be fed.
But you will never regret it.

We will turn them into factories.
Their noses will work like wind mills,
their pulse like sledge-hammers.

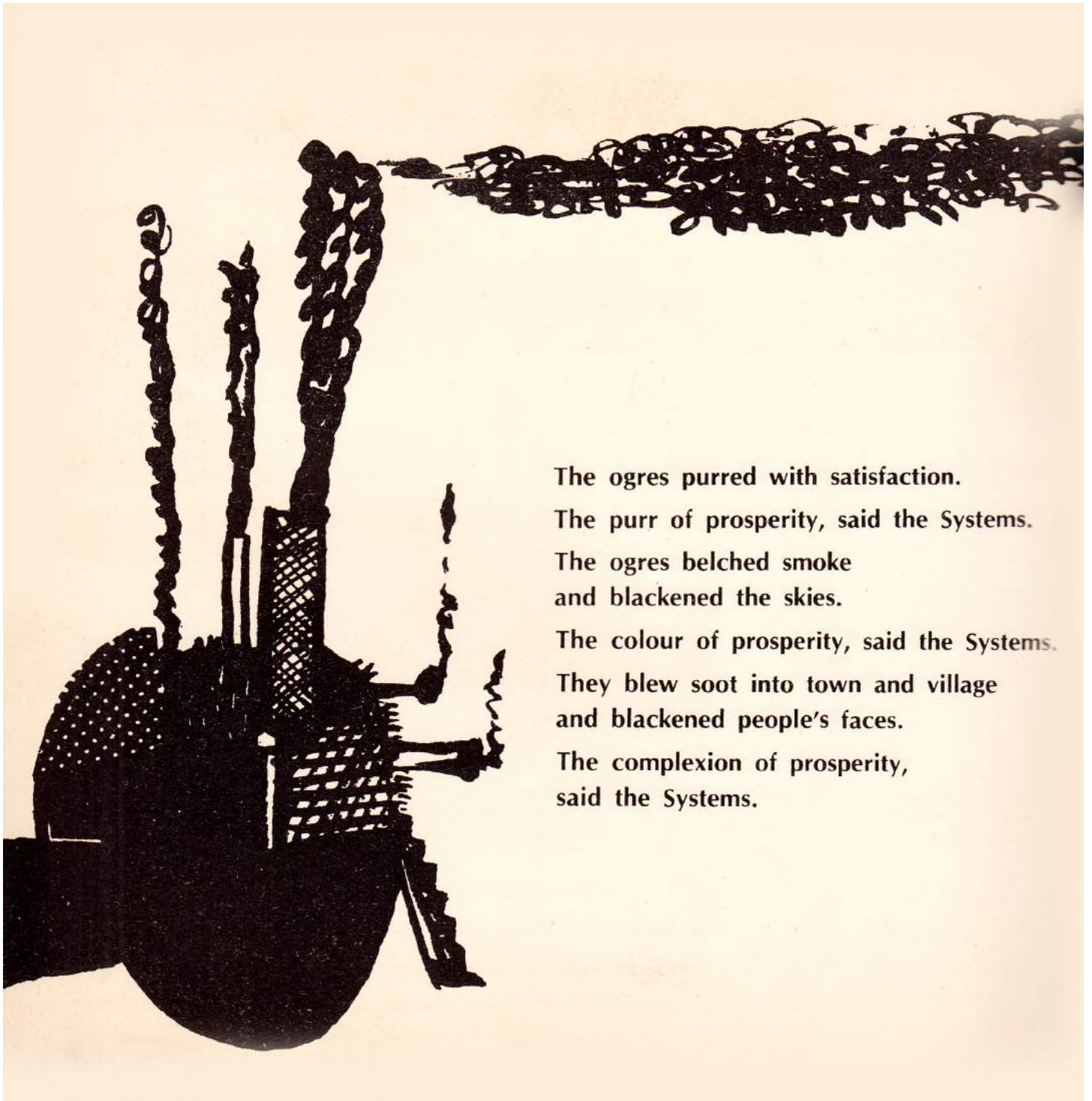


We will set them to serve you.

Then, tickling the ogres again,
they opened more more mouths in their bodies.
Stuck tall chimneys on their chest.
Fixed pipes and ladders, wheels and motors all over.
Sewed push-buttons at the seams.



People brought truck-loads of things to feed them.
For which they cut down forests,
dug up the earth, mowed down fields,
even drained up lakes and rivers.



The ogres purred with satisfaction.
The purr of prosperity, said the Systems.
The ogres belched smoke
and blackened the skies.
The colour of prosperity, said the Systems.
They blew soot into town and village
and blackened people's faces.
The complexion of prosperity,
said the Systems.



They fouled the earth and mountains, seas and rivers.
But as they filled the markets with things
and their pockets with money,
people were glad.

Even with their blackened faces, their soiled feet,
their wheezing parents and gasping children.
Even with their barren woods,
their withered grasslands and their jaundiced skies.



The ogres are still
very much with us.

Arts/Illuminated Literature

K G Subramanyan
Our Friends, the Ogres

Subramanyan's modern fable about the industrial ogres who.

'... blew soot into town and village
and blackened people's faces.

The complexion of prosperity, said
the Systems.' —

is told in an 'illuminated' book with the bold blacks of his graphics
underscoring searingly the wry humour of the text.

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